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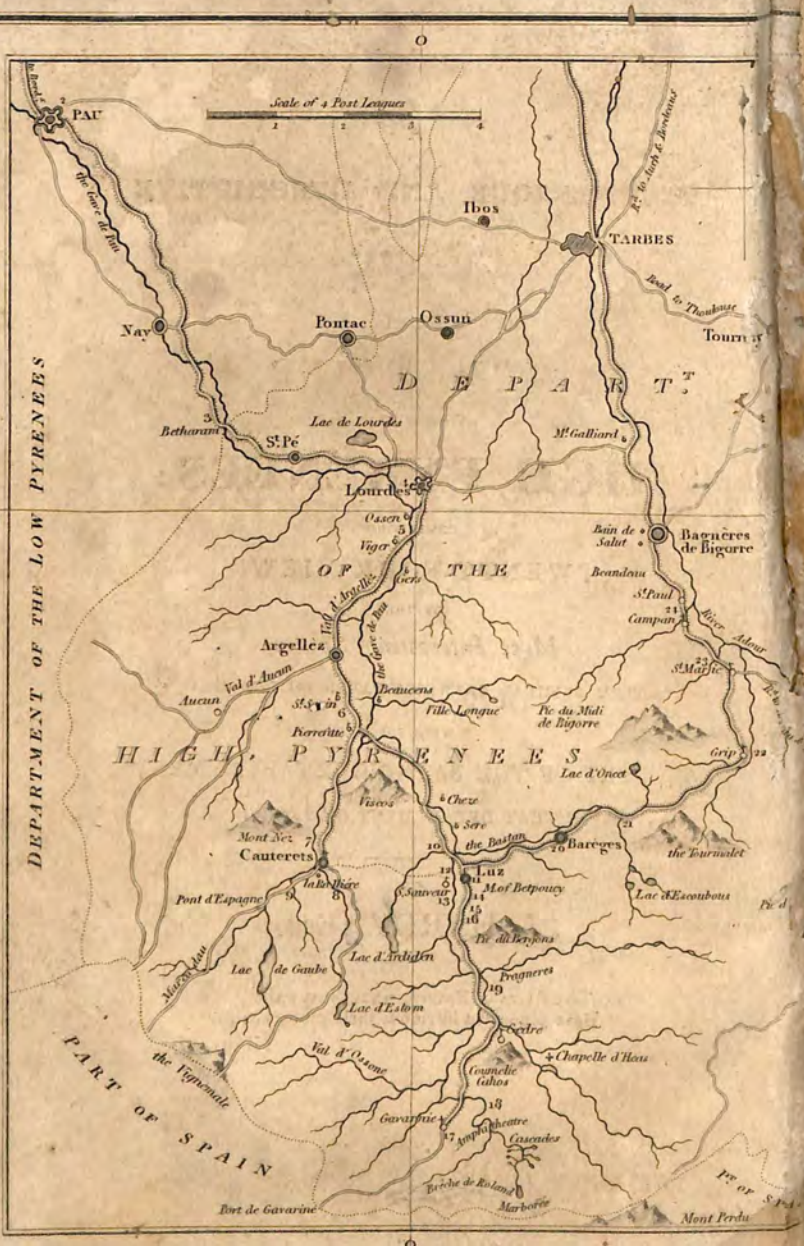

TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE HIGH PYRENEES

The Figures are a Reference to the Plates.

A

PICTURESQUE AND DESCRIPTIVE

Tour

IN THE

MOUNTAINS

OF THE

HIGH PYRENEES:

COMPRISING

TWENTY-FOUR VIEWS

OF THE

Most Interesting Scenes,

FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS TAKEN ON THE SPOT;

WITH SOME

ACCOUNT OF THE BATHING ESTABLISHMENTS

IN THAT DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE.

84374

BY

J. HARDY, Esq.

" The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
" Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps."

BYRON.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY R. ACKERMANN, 101, STRAND.

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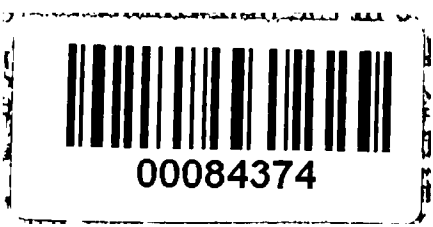

PRINTED BY L. HARRISON, 373, STRAND.

TO

EDWARDS SOUTHARD, *Esq.*

His Sardinian Majesty's Consul at Bordeaux.

TO you, my dear SOUTHARD, I have the sincere pleasure of dedicating these humble attempts at delineating the sublime scenery of the HIGH PYRENEES, the amusement of tracing which was the solace of many an hour in those wild regions.

Other motives than the ties of kindred urge me to this indulgence of my feelings; and I rejoice in the opportunity of renewing the acknowledgment of my gratitude, for uninterrupted kindnesses experienced during a long and painful illness under your hospitable roof.

That yourself and amiable family may long continue to enjoy all the blessings of health and prosperity, is the most ardent wish of

Your affectionate

Friend and Brother,

JOSEPH HARDY.

PREFACE.

THE following pages are the result of an excursion to the Pyrenees, to which the author was irresistibly tempted by their vicinity to Bordeaux, where he had resided several months, and the hope of re-establishing his health by the use of the mineral waters with which they abound. He presents them to the public under the impression, that they may not be altogether useless to others who may be induced by curiosity to explore the sublime scenery of the department of the High Pyrenees; premising, that the designs, which have been selected from more than thrice the number in his portfolio, are not to be considered as the finished pieces of an artist, but as the feeble performances of an amateur.

Some may possibly be disposed to find fault with the paucity of incident in this little volume. To such, the author begs leave to observe, that it has not been his

ambition to make up a book by the recapitulation of his personal adventures; but by means of plain description, and correct representation of striking objects, to furnish, not merely an itinerary, but also a guide to the lovers of the picturesque. He dares not hope that he has performed this task in such a manner, as, if he may use the expression, to transport his readers into the midst of the stupendous scenes themselves. To effect this, he would need the descriptive talents of the highly gifted author of "Highways and Byways in France," in whose interesting volumes will be found numerous illustrations of places delineated in this humble performance; and who himself exclaims, "It is not for me to describe the beauties of these mountains! Volumes have been poured forth on the subject, and will be succeeded by volumes, as long as the noblest scenes of Nature can excite admiration, or until some miracle robs men of their desire to tell what they have seen, and to express what they feel."

To the force of this eulogium, the author

of this Tour will not attempt to add; happy if the joint efforts of his pen and pencil should cause the same scenes to be visited by others, possessing powers of delineation more adequate to the depicturing of the wonders which are here met with at every step.

KENSINGTON,
May 16, 1825.

A

PICTURESQUE AND DESCRIPTIVE TOUR

IN

THE MOUNTAINS

OF THE

HIGH PYRENEES.

AN excursion to the Pyrenees is, to a native of France, what a visit to the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, or a tour to North Wales, is to an Englishman: each is desirous of contemplating Nature in her wildest and most magnificent forms. A Frenchman, however, is more often induced to the trip by the hope of deriving advantage from the mineral baths with which the Pyrenees abound; the general relish for the picturesque being not so strong in France as with the present race of English: but when once he is tempted to explore it, he is equally enthusiastic, and becomes as much the enraptured admirer of Nature in all her grand and most interesting features.

The avidity of travel shewn by our countrymen, and their facility of locomotion, are frequently the subjects of astonishment to our

Continental neighbours. With the superficial among them, the causes are sought in the total absence of any thing picturesque, interesting, or grand, in our own trading island; they are led to suppose that we receive perfectly new impressions, when the mind can act under the genial influence of the climate of France, beyond the reach of those ever-chilling fogs, which, as they imagine, encompass us at every season of the year. More than once have I been questioned, whether we have trees in England. What greatly tends to such deep ignorance are the constant exclamations of delight that escape us, when day succeeds day in all the clear brilliancy of atmosphere of southern France, where, even throughout the winter, the sun will set so gorgeously, and every object so glitter with a rosy tinge, that, till the novelty has subsided, the Englishman often unconsciously feeds French vanity by launching out into extravagant encomiums on such splendid effects.

The usual approach to the Pyrenees is by Bordeaux, a very splendid city, the capital of southern France. The public and private buildings are both rich and classic; the theatre more particularly, viewed from an avenue of lofty trees, is extremely beautiful.

The city is seated on the left bank of the

Garonne, here crossed by a noble stone bridge, now nearly finished: its simple proportions resemble those of Waterloo bridge, but it is of greater length. The foundations were laid by Napoleon, to facilitate the advance of his troops into Spain; and the work has since been carried on by private subscription, the shareholders to be remunerated by moderate tolls. Its port is capable of containing a thousand vessels, and, next to Marseilles, is the finest and most flourishing in the kingdom. A line of quays, backed by handsome dwellings, extends nearly two miles. In the centre of this range stood, till within the last three years, an ancient fortification, called the Château Trompette, to which the French army of the South retreated, under General Clausel, in 1814. The serious injury likely to arise to the city from its threatened bombardment in 1815, determined the public authorities, on the last restoration, to level it to the foundation: its site is now being converted into a public promenade, and, after the lapse of a few years, will be a delightful retreat in the centre of a populous city.

The principal street, called the Chapeau Rouge, is at right angles with the river, and one of the finest I have ever seen. The Exchange, with its Chamber of Commerce, forms the corner; a short distance up, on the opposite side,

is the Hotel de la Prefecture; the lengthened side of the theatre continues the perspective to the opening of a grove of trees: passing this, the same width of street leads on to handsomely decorated stone houses and gay shops, ending in the Place Dauphine, where a double row of trees, with a centre promenade, branches off to the right and to the left.

Parts of the old city are very ancient. The exterior decorations of the many Gothic churches are in admirable preservation, the mildness of the climate tending so materially to soften the effects of time. Near to the Place Dauphine stands the palace, reserved for the habitation of royalty when sojourning here: the exterior is very noble; and the whole, with the gardens annexed, is superior to what London can shew as a kingly dwelling.

The cathedral was built by the English many centuries back. The vault, under the tower of St. Michel, possesses the singular property of preserving the human corpse almost entire: nearly sixty bodies are placed standing or sitting against the wall—a horrible and ghastly sight. Some of them are three hundred years old; the skin has the appearance of leather, and many have their garments still remaining. The person who shews them, an old woman, professes to designate their various situations in life;

such as, a monk, a seigneur, or a mechanic, and even to indicate the disease of which they died.

The walls of a Roman amphitheatre still remain; and every part of the city abounds in fine churches, lively streets, and shady promenades.

The staple article of commerce is the choice and common wine of the country; the quay of the Façade of the Chatrons, a mile and a half in length, being almost solely devoted to its shipment, or landing from the large awkward barges which navigate the river from Toulouse downwards, and the rudders of which are frequently of the same length as the vessel itself.

The opportunities of conveyance to the Pyrenees are few. A diligence leaves Bordeaux weekly for Pau, during three months in summer; and this, or a cabriolet hired for the whole period of the journey, is the only accommodation afforded to the single traveller.

The first thirty miles of the journey I made in the steam-boat, ascending the Garonne, the banks of which, soon after leaving Bordeaux, abound in delightful scenery, handsome modern chateaux, ancient towns, the scene of many a contest in the times of Henri Quatre, and old castles embosomed in vine-clad hills: then again the banks alternately precipitous and out-

stretching; the busy traffic of lofty sailing barges; the gaiety on board the packet; the variety of costume; the rapid advance of the boat through waters without a ripple, opposed to the soft stillness of objects around, all constitute a scene which realizes the descriptions given by novelists of the meandering Garonne.

The immense advantages resulting from the introduction of steam-boats is no where more apparent than here: two generally leave Bordeaux every tide, frequently carrying a hundred passengers each; and rarely any go for a merely pleasurable trip, all having business in view. The effect has been greatly to enhance the value of lands and estates along the course of the river; and a whole day's fatiguing journey is now often compassed in three or four hours. All the machinery employed comes from England, and pays a duty of thirty per cent. on importation; the French taste of decoration is employed in fitting them up; and for refreshment a choice may be made out of twenty dishes, at any moment, and at a very moderate charge. The engineer is usually an Englishman, between whom and the pilot, in their necessary communications, the strange *mélange* of French and English often occasions great laughter.

The destination of these boats is Langon, which lies in the neighbourhood of the far-famed

white wine estates, Sauterne, Preignac, Barsac, Marsac, and many others. The choice red wines, Lafitte, Château-Margaux, &c. are grown in the Medoc, on the same bank of the Garonne, but lower down the river, to the north-west of Bordeaux.

The Bayonne and Pau diligences pass through Langon: I availed myself of a place in the former, and reached Bazas the next stage, through a most luxuriant country. After quitting Langon, the road leaves the Garonne, which bends its course to Agen and Toulouse. A few miles beyond Bazas, we witnessed a most extraordinary change of scene on entering the department of the Landes. Hitherto the country had teemed with every kind of produce, noble trees lining the road the whole distance; among others was a solitary cork-tree, which, as the first that is seen, many an inquisitive traveller has stopped to examine, and to carry off a piece of it. After descending to and crossing the Gers, we entered the department of the Landes: nothing but the gloomy pine is seen; the soil is a blackish sand, with stunted verdure. The road is formed by trunks of the pine placed transversely, giving a most unpleasant motion to vehicles; and the mind in some degree partakes of the blackness of surrounding objects. A glade will sometimes open; yet, as

far as the eye can reach, nothing shews itself but the dismal tree just mentioned. Immense quantities of turpentine are produced from it: the bark being peeled off on one side to the height of twelve feet, a small hollow is formed in the earth at the foot, into which the resin drops as it exudes from the denuded part.

In dry seasons, when the sands lie heavy, the peasants mount on stilts four feet high, going with great rapidity as much as seven miles an hour. On Napoleon's journey to Bayonne, in his passage into Spain, a guard of honour, thus mounted, was formed for the purpose of escorting him through the department of the Landes.

The same aspect of country continues to Roquefort, a distance of thirty miles, without a single habitation, excepting the post-house and the miserable village of Captieux; all is dreary and desolate, unless at times when the deep and solemn masses of fir are contrasted with the unclouded light of a splendid moon glittering on the sands; or, as it happened to us, when the day closes in with storm, and the lightning, flashing from out of a yellow-streaked horizon, gives a grandeur to the whole that is truly sublime.

Roquefort is pleasantly situated on an acclivity. The road to the High Pyrenees here diverges from the Bayonne road; I therefore

quitted the diligence, and bade adieu to my smoking companions, Spanish priests, returning to their native country. After a short sleep of three hours, I started again in a hired cabriolet as early as three in the morning, being desirous of escaping as much as possible the intense heats of mid-day. After an hour's ride, we again entered forests of pine, not cleared into patches as hitherto, but one entire mass, through which, as no regular road can be formed, each traveller selects the track that he conceives to have the least depth of sand. A stranger to the country could never extricate himself, particularly after wind and rain, when the former ruts have been swept level. The drivers and others are guided by certain trees which they recognise.

At Villeneuve de Marsan we left these scenes behind us, and at once all the glories of a southern clime opened before us. As the day broke, dispelling the morning vapours, I first caught sight of the High Pyrenees at the distance of seventy miles. What a superb scene! the whole mid landscape in a deep sombre tint, fleecy clouds skirting the apparent horizon, above which broke the glittering pinnacles of the snow-capped mountains, their eastern sides, of a rosy tinge, shewing out most forcibly by

their violet shadows. A slight sketch of the effect is given in PLATE I.

Here let me quote the language of an eloquent writer, the author of "Highways and Byways in France," who thus describes the impressions produced on his mind by this very view:

"There is not in nature a finer spectacle than a distant chain of mountains covered with snow and glistening in the sun. It is impossible to describe this appearance, nor is it easy to define the sensations it produces in the mind. The object has in it something loftier than beauty, and possesses a softened sublimity totally unassociated with fear. Unlike other vast works of nature, it does not speak to our apprehensions; nor does it, like those of art, bring humiliating notions of imperfection and decay: but stretching far away along the horizon, in celestial splendour of colouring, it looks like the boundary of the world, and might be believed a fit resting-place between earth and heaven.

"Such were my reflections when I first discovered the Pyrenees, at about thirty leagues' distance from the rising grounds near the town of Villeneuve de Marsan. I shall never forget that moment. My delight was of a kind to be felt once in life, but which stamped an impres-

sion, vivid in proportion to its suddenness, and more lasting than that produced by years of calm and regulated enjoyment. In gazing on the golden transparency which the mountains seemed to present, I fancied myself transported to some scene of fairy-land, and doubted for a while their existence. They looked more like the cloud-formed imagery of the skies; and I many a time regretted, as I approached them, the illusion which their solid reality put to flight."

In the absence of frequent diligences, a cabriolet may be hired at most of the post-towns, carrying you on to the next relay: but this is certainly a most vexatious mode of travelling, from the constant necessity of bargaining and resisting impositions. By this sort of conveyance I reached Aire, and found the crowded diligence just leaving it for Pau, having been ten hours, with eight horses, dragging through the last twenty miles. The *conducteur* could only offer me room in the *imperiale*, stretched at full length by the side of himself, an old soldier, and all the luggage and lumber of the other passengers. As no suspended vehicle could be hired, I took possession of this berth as the least of evils.

The town of Aire stands on a very commanding height on a river, over which are the re-

mains of a handsome bridge. In the centre of the town is a college for the education of youth destined for the church: their appearance excites a smile when calling to mind the same class at Oxford or Cambridge. Many of them were without stockings, and engaged in doing the duties of a paltry shop, or arranging the stall of some fruit-woman.

Proceeding on, we found the intense heat of a mid-day sun almost unbearable, by which the mind may be said to be unfitted in a great degree for the enjoyment of the beauties of nature, that meet you at every step. Passing the post-house of Auriac, we came to Navailles, the scene of many skirmishes between the French and Lord Wellington in his advance from Spain in 1814. Most of the small bridges were new or repairing, having been destroyed by the retreating armies. One spot was shewn on which the English general had nearly been taken prisoner: he had been overheard planning a *reconnoissance* for the following morning by a Frenchman, who communicated his intelligence to Marshal Soult; but previously to doing this, he made known his intentions to a countryman of his, who went immediately and apprised our commander, who thus escaped the probable ill consequences of a surprise.

My humble companions were violent Buona-

Le Château Henri Quatre à Pau.

partists, and loud in their abuse of the English government; but, with their national politeness, they always contrived to separate the individual from his rulers. I had defended, to the best of my ability, the share which England took in the overthrow of Napoleon: they became outrageous in their vituperation, and had I not had a little experience of a Frenchman's violent gesticulation, I might have feared personal insult. However, it certainly shewed an amiable trait in their character, that on my experiencing a severe recurrence of a disorder while thus extended on the top of the diligence, these same men were most kind in their endeavours to alleviate my situation, each holding over me an umbrella, and exposing himself to the ill effects of the scorching rays of the sun.

Towards evening we reached Pau, the principal town of Bearn, delightfully situated on the banks of the Gave de Pau. At the western extremity of the town rises the proud château of Henri Quatre. The park attached to this, his birthplace, forms the principal promenade, from which the view is most enchanting. The outworks of the castle slope down from the terrace to the river's edge; a handsome bridge crosses the double torrent; and, on the left, swell up the green hills of the Jurançon and Gelos, whose vineyards produce the fine white

wines so much esteemed by foreigners. The eye then takes the whole range of the Low Pyrenees, enjoying the superb contrast of the bright verdure of the tufted mountains, spotted with villages and châteaux, opposed to the violet blue of the remoter distance, the line of which is broken by the towering up of the snow-capped Pic du Midi de Pau.

Pau has latterly been the winter residence of several English families, who retire during the great heats of summer to the mountains. As economy is so easily blended with the modes of French society, and the place itself is gay and lively, there is little doubt that Pau will soon be one of the most favoured residences of the emigrant English.

Since the restoration of the Bourbons, extensive repairs of the old castle have been going on, but in very bad taste, rather destroying than restoring this interesting relic of the most amiable of the French sovereigns, a view of which is given in PLATE II. The cradle of Henri Quatre (a tortoise-shell) and many other remains are still shewn.

One house in the centre of the town has written upon it, "Bernadotte, King of Sweden, was born here." Branches of his family still reside in the place and its environs.

The Bearnais have very finely marked fea-

tures, especially the women, with jet-black hair, like their near neighbours, the Spaniards. Even at this distant day I noticed many men who bore a strong resemblance to the portraits of Henri Quatre, of which they are not a little proud. At Pau, as in most other parts of France, there are two classes of men essentially distinct in character: one belonging to the *ancien régime*, including the old noblesse; the other embracing all those who have sprung up since the revolution. In dress, manners, and outward appearance, they are as opposite as light and darkness, except that the younger still retain the universal politeness of the nation. The old beaux have silvered hair, wear white silk stockings, and, with a roquelaure, are just what we see on our English stage, the very pink of fribble and gallantry. The other party is mostly in a sort of military undress costume, with complete mops of black hair *à la Brutus*, terrific whiskers, and their gait the most consequential and supercilious that can be imagined. The public promenades shew them in fine contrast. The same may almost be said of the fair sex: of these the elder are principally distinguished by daily attendance at mass, dressed in a full-trimmed lace cap, in lieu of a bonnet. It may well be supposed that there is no congeniality of sentiment between the two; each having

a mortal hatred for the other, and shewing their reciprocal bitterness by almost bloodthirsty language and invective.

In a day's journey from Tours to Poitiers, my companions in the diligence gave a fair specimen of this sort of feeling. The party consisted of a count, with the Order of St. Louis, his wife and sister; also a countess, with her daughter, a family mentioned in the interesting "Memoirs of Madame la Roche Jacquelin:" they were then returning to La Vendée. The other passenger was a young and lively Frenchman, and, as it afterwards appeared, a hot Buonapartist. The greater part of the day he had been every thing that was amiable; when accidentally the old chevalier discovered the eagle engraved on the clasp of the young man's cloak: that was sufficient; the whole scene changed; coldness and formality now took the place of all kindlier feelings, and sullen silence continued during the remainder of the journey.

It was this same young Frenchman who helped me out of rather a laughable situation at Poitiers. We had supped, slept, and breakfasted there; and at the moment of reckoning, the landlady, who spoke nothing but the *patois*, said she was very well satisfied with all, except *Monsieur le jeune Anglais*, meaning me. As I afterwards understood, she expressed herself

very much hurt in her feelings and reputation because I had taken the sheets off the bed, as if they were dirty. The fact was, I had been obliged to do the same here as every where else; that is, remove them altogether, on account of their excessive dampness. When my explanation was given, she was perfectly satisfied—satisfied with that which might have caused a severe illness.

Before entering upon the Pyrenees, it may not be amiss to give a slight geographical sketch of their position. They take their first rise near Bayonne, resting on the bay of Biscay. The course is continued in parallel ranges through Gascony, Languedoc, and Roussillon, and ends on the shores of the Mediterranean sea; varying in breadth from fifty to one hundred and twenty miles, and extending two hundred from east to west. A road, nearly parallel with their range, runs from Bayonne through Orthes, Pau, Tarbes, St. Gaudens, and thence to Toulouse; the mountains, more or less distant, always giving a magnificent horizon to a ride of one hundred and ninety miles. The centre point of the chain is in the department of the High Pyrenees, diverging from Pau: seen from thence, they resemble a vast mass of violet-coloured clouds, fantastically grouped. It is difficult to describe the sensations experienced

on the first view of them. Every hour of the day varies their appearance, and throws around them new charms; whether you see them at sunrise, when all but their gilded summits are enveloped in blue vapour; at mid-day, when swelling up majestically under a serene sky; or when the tempest hovers, and the thunder rolls, re-echoing through the vast range of their lengthened valleys.

In connection with the diligence from Bordeaux, there are others during the season to all the bathing establishments, Barèges, St. Sauveur, Cauterets, &c. The road to Cauterets ascends the right bank of the Gave. Passing the ruins of the castle of Coriaze, we soon reached the sanctuary of Betheram: after crossing the Gave at Betheram, the road ascends all the way.

The sanctuary of Notre Dame at Betheram is much resorted to in pilgrimage by the neighbouring peasants at certain periods of the year. The church is seated on the summit of a hill called Calvary; in front of it are placed statues, grotesquely carved, representing the passion of our Saviour. The 15th of August and the 8th of September are the grand *fêtes*, when the Basques, the Bearnais, and the Bigourdans repair thither in great numbers, the males and females alternately chanting the verse of some doleful hymn.

A short distance from Betheram you enter the department of the High Pyrenees by a marble bridge, which crosses the Gave: from the centre of this bridge the ivy falls in festoons, producing a most picturesque effect, which I have endeavoured to represent in the annexed view.—See PLATE III.

In the neighbourhood of St. Pè, the hunting of wild pigeons is followed with great success. The manner of taking them is this: On the sides of a narrow valley three trunks of trees are placed perpendicularly, to the height of forty feet. On the top is a slight basket-work covered with branches, in which men conceal themselves: others again are employed at the entrance of the valley, making a great noise, and waving flags, which have the effect of frightening the timid birds, and driving them into it. Their companions now letting fly from the concealed situation a sort of racquets, which the pigeons take for birds of prey, easily fall into the snares prepared for them, where they are caught by hundreds at a time.

Approaching Lourdes, twenty miles from Pau, we came in sight of its ancient castle, seated on an almost inaccessible rock: backed by vast and bold mountain scenery, and overlooking the town, it forms a most striking view,

as represented in PLATE IV. Of the six towers which formerly existed, the large square one and some bastions only remain, and are now converted into a state-prison. On the advance of Lord Wellington, he was about to lay siege to it, when he was called off to more important objects.

The environs of Lourdes are highly picturesque: here commences the first chain of mountains, at the grand pass of the Lavedan, to defend which the castle was erected. Large marble quarries are found in the neighbourhood; also several grottoes in the side of a mountain: the most beautiful is called *la Grotte du Loup.* The entrance is through a long gallery, narrow and extremely difficult: with the aid of flambeaux, the roof is seen to expand, and three immense fissures in the rock meet at one point. Groping along the centre one, you arrive at the brink of a precipice, down which the long and dull sounds of a falling stone, and its last dash into the water, clearly indicate the great depth of the frightful abyss. The numerous bats flapping around heighten the gloominess of the scene. A mile distant from the town is a lake said to be of poisonous quality. The view from the castle-height amply repays the fatigue of its ascent.

The CASTLE of LOURDES. 4

At Lourdes there prevails the same indifference to common cleanliness among the lower orders, both in person and dwellings, as throughout the south of France; unless it should fortunately happen that a rivulet flows through the town, when the latter are somewhat more accessible: but usually stagnant pools of slush and filth are found from one end of the village to the other. These, with the thermometer at 102°, cannot but generate an unwholesome atmosphere, and are highly disgusting to a traveller. The many little beauties also which constitute an English village scene are rarely met with in France: no moss-covered roof; no smiling garden in front; no rustic church enveloped in "sprawling ivy" to admire. French scenery therefore must be viewed at a distance; then indeed it may be called "beautiful France." I have sometimes been struck with the beauty of a landscape, and have attempted its outline; but when I came to analyze the whole, I have found that my admiration has been produced by the effects of the brilliancy of the atmosphere, and that was infinitely beyond my limited powers of delineation.

Hitherto we had traversed a country of lofty hills only: at a distance

> "the mountains huge appear
> Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
> Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky."

On approaching this barrier of mountains, the chain is seen divided into deep and lengthened valleys, through the largest of which the Gave alternately rolls an impetuous torrent, and glides peacefully at the foot of the many villages which adorn its banks.

We still continued on high ground some way beyond Lourdes. To the left of the road is a series of stupendous bare rocks: fir-trees of stunted growth clothe their lowest sides, casting a gloomy shade. The pellucid springs, however, gushing forth from the fissures, and the greater freshness of the air, give an animation to the scene that is truly delightful.

The rocks consist of granite, schist, and calcareous stone; veins of lead, copper, zinc, and iron, we met with, but none are worked to any profit. The land round about is so little capable of cultivation, that where a ledge of rock is found with sufficient depth of soil, labourers are seen engaged in its culture with a cord attached to the waist, the other end fastened to a rock, to prevent their falling, should their feet slip during the seemingly perilous undertaking. The few scattered houses are of simple construction, roofed with slate, and, with their singular gable-ends, have much the appearance of Gothic chapels.

The costume of the men is a Spanish cloak descending to the heels. The women have a

The VALLEY of ARGELES

long scarlet hood, called *capulet*. Their usual language is unintelligible to strangers, and extremely disagreeable in sound, though they boast of its being highly figurative.

Two leagues from Lourdes, the road crosses the Gave by a marble bridge; and at once we entered upon the beautiful valley of Argelès. On the nearest left, the valley of Castel Loubon also opens into it, with its ruined castle overlooking the gorge, as shewn in PLATE V. In the mid-distance stands the village of Junculos, beyond which, between the torrent and the towering mountains on the right, a series of wooded hills swell up, crowned with valleys and châteaux. The mountains in the greater distance are snow-capped, thirty miles off. An immense way up the side of the mountains are cultivated slopes, interrupted here and there by rocks perfectly sterile, which have fallen from the high peaks above the region of the pine, ordinarily buried in the clouds. The entire valley is of the richest verdure; the trees, particularly the walnut, lime, and cherry, grow to an enormous size. The entire scene is most splendid and luxuriant:

" collected here,
As in one point, all Nature's charms appear."

Advancing towards Argelès, a profusion of beautiful objects crowds upon the sight: a suc-

cession of ruined castles, churches built in the Gothic style, and picturesquely placed villages, claim the attention of the enraptured traveller, who at last becomes almost fatigued with the endless calls on his admiration. In a ride of seven miles, castles and villages are incessantly starting forth in every variety of romantic position.

Nothing can equal the beauty of the situation of Argelès; with the panoramic view around, it is perfectly exquisite. The traveller must here rest a time to enjoy the infinite variety. The valley of Auzun spreads out at his feet; to the north is a circular hill, called Balandrau; from thence a superb *coup-d'œil* is obtained of the valley: to the south is the Pic de Soulom, detached by its loftiness from the neighbouring mountains; behind this peak the summits of three other hills rise up into the azure of the sky, the masses of snow which streak their sides in fantastic shapes admirably contrasting with the deep purple of their bases. The nearer view traces the picturesque banks and meanders of the Gave, in its silvery course to the farther extent of the level. The whole scene has the appearance of one vast piece of mosaic: patches of the bright yellow blossom of the broom, the rich brown of the ripening harvest, the pale green of the beautiful meadows, skirted by

noble trees, are all so enchantingly mingled, that the spectator feels absolutely bewildered with the splendid profusion:

"Here spring the living herbs profusely wild
O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power
Of botanist to number up their tribes."

In the immediate neighbourhood are the remains of eight castles, each giving character to and embellishing the surrounding landscapes: they formerly served to protect the country during the desperate incursions of the Spaniards.

A short distance from Argelès, on the summit of a wooded hill, stands the monastery of St. Savin, in early times a place of great resort, on account of the various miracles said to be performed there.

Proceeding along the valley, which now begins to contract, every step unfolding new charms, we caught sight of another old castle, Beaucens, at the foot of which flows the first mineral spring that the traveller meets with. The temperature of the water is 87°. Two baths, which have been erected, are used solely by the neighbouring peasants. Still farther on are the remains of another monastery, St. Orense, picturesquely seated on the edge of a frightful ravine.

The next village is that of Pierrefitte, re-

presented in PLATE VI. Here is the last post-house in the kingdom. The valley of Argelès here terminates, and two gorges open, one leading to Barèges, the other to Cauterets: the latter is to the right; and at the moment of sketching, a large white cloud swept along its entrance. A branch of the Gave flows through each of these gorges, which run nearly parallel. Immediately on entering the gorge of Cauterets, the road is overhung by terrific masses of rock, called *Les belles Horreurs.* The road itself is in admirable order, sometimes overlooking the torrent, or creeping at the foot of some vast grotesque mountain; at others skirting its course in all its foaming majesty.

The first fall of the Gave, named the Côte du Limaçon, is soon seen; but many smaller ones are previously noticed, dashing from the lateral mountains in narrow stripes. The whole of the scenery around the Limaçon is awfully grand: huge blocks of marble and granite lie scattered in great confusion, indicating some mighty convulsion of nature; for casting the eye upwards, naked spaces are seen on the sides of the mountain, whence they must have been dislodged.

> "Mountains have fallen,
> Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
> Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
> The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters."

VILLAGE of PIERRE-PITTE.

From these open quarries, the neighbouring villages have been built and repaired for ages: the choicest veins of marble are employed in the decoration of various edifices in France. Clearing the vicinity of the cascade, the mountains separate more widely; and that named the Péguère stands in front like a gigantic pyramid. Cauterets, which is seated at its foot, is not yet seen. Half an hour's ride at last brings you on a small triangular valley, suddenly opening, intersected by numerous rivulets, bending their course to the Gave, now foaming with great violence. In the centre of this valley is the village of Cauterets, one of the most frequented of the watering-places of the Pyrenees, a view of which is given in PLATE VII.

The several mineral baths of the High Pyrenees being renowned throughout France for the cure and alleviation of many disorders, invalids resort hither from the most distant corners of the kingdom, making a long and fatiguing journey of frequently six or seven hundred miles. The largest of these establishments, Barèges, is principally frequented by the military, at the expense of government, for the cure of maladies arising from old wounds, upon which the waters are affirmed to have an almost miraculous effect. St. Sauveur is another source resorted to for the numerous class of nervous

disorders; Les Eaux Bonnes and Bagnères de Louchon for consumptions; and Cauterets for diseases of the digestive organs. At the commencement and close of each season the visitants usually assemble at Bagnères de Bigorre, where a series of balls and other amusements dispose all parties to blend innocent dissipation with the pursuit of health.

A circuit of sixty miles in these mountainous regions would comprise nearly all these watering-places.

Cauterets consists of two small streets, of about a hundred houses, opening to the Grande Place, at one corner of which is seen the bridge over the Gave. Every house is arranged for the accommodation of visitants; and three *traiteurs* serve for the supply of the whole village, at very economical prices.

As government has the nominal superintendence of the baths, a medical inspector is appointed; and it is customary for each patient to consult and receive directions from him as to the temperature proper for his individual case. The baths are at some little distance from the village, with the exception of that of Bruzaud, which lies at the foot of the mountain, rising abruptly to the east of Cauterets.

There are eight separate sources within an area of two miles: those of César, Espagnols,

BATH or LA BALLIERE, looking towards Cauterets. 8

and Pause lie close to each other, at different elevations, on the same mountain, as seen in plate 7. The one of greatest resort is La Rallière, half a league distant; females and infirm invalids being usually carried in light sedan-chairs, *à la Guy Faux*. Bathing commences as early as three in the morning for the peasantry; from the hours of five till nine the visitors commonly assemble, each taking their turn in the vacant baths, in number about thirty. The building, as seen on the left in PLATE VIII. is nearly new, erected by government entirely of marble. The view from it, represented in the same plate, looks back on the valley of Cauterets and Mont Nez, which stands at the prodigious elevation of ten thousand feet above the level of the sea; its huge breast most frequently buried in vapour. From the mountain on the extreme right, four distinct mineral sources supply as many baths.

Leaving the baths of La Rallière, we approach the cascade of Lutour, which takes its rise from the mountain, bedded with snow in the remote distance. There are two other baths, those of Petit St. Sauveur and the Près, placed on the main channel of the Gave, near which another foaming cataract dashes along in tremendous uproar:

> "In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
> It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round."

The hottest of these springs issues from the side rock, and mingles with the torrent.

The cascade of Lutour forms the subject of the NINTH VIEW.

Every thing like open road ceases at Cauterets; the remainder of the defile into Spain being a continued series of acclivities and rugged rocks, only passable during the months of July and August.

This is the usual extent of the promenades made by visitants; but the enthusiastic admirer of wild scenery in its most imposing forms is led on to find ample gratification to his most sanguine expectations. This excursion will be hereafter noticed.

Cauterets possesses a most delightful promenade, not in the usual French taste, merely alleys of lofty trees, but in every respect a small park scene, planted with every variety of tree both in clumps and vistas. A few picturesque cottages scattered around, the paths intercepted by silvery brooks, and the entire surrounding scenery glittering in the richest hues of summer, form a *coup-d'œil* perfectly magnificent and enchanting.

The amusements of the place are few: they have what is termed a Vauxhall twice a week, which is simply a ball, of no very splendid kind; but the French, who shine so eminently

CASCADE DE LUTOUR [illegible] LA CLUSE 9

in society, have their *soirées* quite easy of access to a stranger on his previously presenting his card. Great numbers of the military were stationed at this time in the village, part of the ridiculously named Sanitary Cordon, since destined to undertake the invasion of Spain. Persons desirous of making excursions into the neighbouring mountains are obliged to gain permission of the commanding officer, who appoints a soldier to escort them; and to prevent all communication with the dreaded Spaniards, a very high discipline is kept up: all the defiles are strictly guarded by parties of men, who are relieved every three days. Two poor Italians having strayed across the frontier were at this moment performing quarantine in a cave amidst the mountains: from the many small presents made them by the visitants of Cauterets, they had not much reason to regret their detention.

The bathing season commences about the 1st of July, lasting till the end of August, when sharp frosts set in, and frequently snow falls, as was the case for three days in the beginning of September this year. The company usually amount to about a thousand, with perhaps a dozen English or Irish families: the rest are made up of people of all the Continental nations.

The chemical analysis of the principal bath of La Rallière is as follows:

Eighty pounds troy of water evaporated in a glass capsule to driness, yielded a residuum of 2 dwt. 8 grs. This residuum has a sweetish alkaline taste, strongly attracts the humidity of the atmosphere, and when subjected to various processes, furnished the following results:

1. Half its volume of hydro-sulphuric acid.
2. Deuto-hydro-chlorate of sodium . . . 40 *grs.*
3. Deuto-carbonate of sodium . . . 36
4. Deuto-sulphate of sodium . . . 27
5. Greasy matter . . . 21
6. Silex . . . 30

The temperature of the water is 31° of Reaumur's, or 101° of Fahrenheit's thermometer.

The society of a gentleman, an amateur artist, whom I had slightly known in London, and with whom I accidentally met at Cauterets, was a most agreeable acquisition: with him I made an excursion to the grandest portion of the Pyrenees, the Circle of Gavarnie. Previously, however, to giving a recital of it, I must attempt a description of the scenes which skirt the frontiers of Spain, in the direction of the Vignemale and the lake of Gaube, by the passes of the Pont d'Espagne and the cascade of Serizet.

Passing the two baths of Petit St. Sauveur, and the Près, and mounting in a zigzag direction to half the height of the mountain, having cleared the dense masses of pine, and escaped the din of the rushing cataracts below, you

arrive where enormous blocks of granite intercept the path; and again descending to the edge of the Gave, its waters foaming in tremendous roar, especially when impeded in their course by a fallen mass of rock, against which the whole trunk of a tree frequently dashes with terrific fury, the entire face of Nature becomes awfully gloomy and imposing. The black foliage of the fir, the sterile ridges of grey rocks on every side piled up to immense heights, the resting-places only of eagles, give that deep impression to the mind which is never effaced by objects of more striking beauty.

The cascade of Serizet is heard afar off by a dull heavy sound, as from thunder: approaching it, you see an inclined plane of waters, bearing down on one huge rock, in the vain effort of tearing it from its bed. The torrent then forms almost one cloud of spray, and precipitates itself into the deep gulf;

> "And from the loud-resounding rocks below,
> Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
> A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower."

The thick vapour around you, acted upon by the rays of the sun, falls sparkling in all the colours of the rainbow. Continuing on by a most difficult though not dangerous path, we passed two smaller cataracts, the Pas de l'Ours and Boussées. The pencil of a Turner would

be required to paint all the wonderful effects of the wild scenery on all sides. At last the Pont d'Espagne appears: after an hour's walk, two gorges open on this spot, resembling those at Pierrefitte, but more wild; the one on the left is the valley of Marcadau, which communicates with Spain by an easy path. Each of these ravines furnishes a torrent, which, joining just above and becoming furious by their junction, tear along in frightful rapidity, making a succession of falls to the foot of the Pont Pastoral, the nearest spot from which the spectator can dare to contemplate the scene; when,

> "falling fast from slope to slope,
> With wild infracted course and lessen'd roar,
> It gains a safer bed."

Turning to the left, and climbing the steep sides of the mountain, after an hour's walk towards the south, there opens before you a vast reservoir, surrounded by mountains, whose fronts, covered with snow, are reflected with extraordinary minuteness in the azure of its limpid waters: this is the lake of Gaube. From the centre of the chain of mountains proudly rises the glacier of the Vignemale, glittering with its triple head.

Those who fear the fatigue of this excursion may be carried by the mountaineers in light sedan-chairs, at the price of twenty francs. Large

parties are thus formed, carrying provisions for a slight repast, with the addition of excellent trout, which are caught in the lake, and dressed in a neighbouring solitary cabin: a trunk of a tree hollowed out serves for a boat.

Very few extend their researches beyond this point, but new pleasures and sensations await those who dare approach nearer to the snows and glaciers of the Vignemale, and track the wild deer in his fearful leaps from rock to rock. The mountain of the Vignemale is 10,332 feet above the level of the sea, and the highest of the French Pyrenees; as Mont Perdu, 250 feet higher, is on the side of Spain.

The excursion I have before alluded to occupied five days, embracing the bathing estatablishments of St. Sauveur, Barèges, and the greatest natural curiosity of the Pyrenees, the cascades and Circle of Gavarnie. It is possible to reach St. Sauveur by a most painful traverse of the mountains, as may be seen in the map; but the usual route is by returning to Pierrefitte, and following the course of the left-hand pass. After crossing the bridge of Ville Longue, you enter the narrow valley which leads to Luz: this road, like that of Cauterets, is skirted by the Gave. It should here be understood, that all the torrents bear the general name of the Gave; and the Spaniards, as a term of reproach, give

the inhabitants of these districts the cant name of *Gavaches*. As the sides of the mountains close in, their deep red colouring strongly attests the presence of iron ore, although none of the veins have yet been worked. After an hour's drive, the rocks become nearly naked, black and frowning in awful sublimity, and rising perpendicularly to such tremendous heights, as to threaten the safety of the passing traveller. The prodigies of art here rival those of nature: a road of the most superb kind is carried across ravines, or rocks are pierced, which, from their abruptness, it is impossible to blow up. At points, where a projecting crag impedes all progress, marble bridges are thrown over the torrent at an appalling height; and thus alternately on the right or left bank, and passing seven marble bridges, you first catch sight of the enchanting valley of Luz.—See PLATE X. This road was undertaken in 1732, and is a proud monument of the then existing government.

The gradual opening from the last of these bridges is truly sublime. On the right, stretches up on the sides of the mountains village beyond village; and above these, where a ridge will admit of cultivation, a few cabins shew the perseverance with which man pursues his labours in these inhospitable regions. The sight is carried on to the centre of the picture, where

rises the mountain of Betpouey, having St. Sauveur, and the defile leading to Gavarnie, at its feet. A little on the left is the town of Luz, with the remains of its castle towering on a rock, where the valley of Barèges displays itself. The left corner of the picture is superbly rich in cultivation; the inclosures all fringed with graceful trees, particularly the chesnut and acacia. One village, named Chèze, stands most romantically some way up the mountain, and till you have passed it some distance, the commanding *plateau*, in the centre of which it is placed, is hardly distinguishable, so seemingly lost to the world is its situation. I can never forget the sensation which I experienced on first viewing it: for the moment, the spectator imagines that its inhabitants must be of a race quite new to us of the lower regions. I frequently had a desire to visit the place; and though I had reason to expect that I should be disappointed in my first impression, yet the curious observer of men and manners could no doubt find ample gratification in viewing them in such an isolated state. This village possesses two churches, with about one hundred and fifty houses. From the point at which we were stationed, two lofty waterfalls seemed almost dropping into the midst of it.

Through the valley we were now entering, shewn in plate 10. the Gave flows peacefully; the

road is lined with double rows of trees, as is customary throughout France. At the termination of the level ground is the town of Luz, watered by numerous rivulets, meandering to the Gave, which, in the spring months, when the snow melts, must be a very wide and furious torrent, although on a plain. The town of Luz was formerly a place of note, particularly in the frontier wars; and now in the winter months it is resorted to by those who are driven from the mountains by the severity of the season in such inclement regions. Two roads here branch off; the right leads to St. Sauveur, a mile off; the left to Barèges: to the former we directed our course, making a ride of about twenty miles from Cauterets. The approach to St. Sauveur is represented in PLATE XI. We were highly delighted with the taste and elegance displayed in the arrangement and construction of the houses of this watering-place, about thirty in number. Crossing the marble bridge, the road winds along at the foot of a rock, whence the traveller has a view of the bridge and foot of the mountain of Betpouey. There is a gentility connected with this establishment which forms a strong contrast with Cauterets; and as the visitants are few, all become necessarily intimate and sociable. There is but one mineral spring adapted for the relief of the different varieties of nervous disorders.

ENTRANCE to SAINT SAUVEUR.

The expense of an excellent bed-room, with breakfast *à la fourchette*, dinner of four dishes, dessert, and wine, is but equivalent to five francs a day; and families may arrange still more economically. When the season is over, all the houses are closed up, and the inhabitants retire to Luz down in the valley. A view of the entrance to St. Sauveur is given in PLATE XII.

One of the greatest delicacies of the season is the flesh of the wild deer, shot on the mountains, the chief purveyor of which is a deaf and dumb man of herculean strength, who is frequently out four days together, engaged in their pursuit, sleeping in caves. His shoes are supplied with five iron spikes at the bottom, and with these he ascends steep ridges with incredible velocity. During a subsequent visit which I made to this place, the same man returned from an excursion enveloped in an enormously large bear-skin. The account he gave was (as understood by those accustomed to his signs), that, lying concealed behind a rock, waiting the approach of some deer, he was dreadfully alarmed at seeing a bear, which at the moment was irritated by a number of insects tormenting its eyes. With great caution he loaded his piece with eight bullets, and with a sure aim sent them right into his head. The creature, as he describes it, rolled down the side

of the mountain a full mile, himself carefully watching him, and a favourable opportunity offering, he again took aim and laid him dead. Stripping him of his skin and cutting out his grease was the affair of the next day, and with these he came down to St. Sauveur, elated beyond measure with his splendid trophies.

St. Sauveur possesses a great number of delightful promenades, which may be enjoyed without much fatigue; another branch of the Gave flows between precipitous banks at its feet: the public walk looks down upon it, and commands a view represented in PLATE XIII. Again descending to and crossing the torrent, you mount to the ruins of the church of St. Paul, where you enjoy a panoramic view that is truly enchanting.

Having prepared for our long-promised excursion to the cascades of Gavarnie, engaged a guide, and hired small horses well adapted to the paths, from their extreme sure-footedness, we fixed our departure for the following morning, at the early hour of four, so as to arrive at Gavarnie by eight, before the fierce heat of the sun commences, and to have the opportunity of witnessing the brilliant effect of its rising on the peaked summits. Warm clothing was also deemed essential, as the vapours frequently sweep along with all the disagreeable effects of

VIEW from the PROMENADE at St SAUVEUR

a heavy shower of rain. Our party was small, consisting of three persons, my companion, the guide, and myself: others had been desirous of joining us, but my friend observed, that his experience had proved to him, that those who do not use the pencil are incessantly annoyed by the many delays which their more deeply interested companions allow themselves, particularly where so great a variety of sublime scenes call for some traces of them.

The appearance of the morning indicated a favourable day for the perfect enjoyment of these wild regions.

We left St. Sauveur by a most excellent road, that conducted us to the edge of the Gave, which we crossed by a modern marble bridge, of noble proportions, and continued our course along the right bank, leaving the ruins of the chapel of St. Marie to the left. The defile here abruptly opens upon a highly cultivated farm, with its picturesque habitation placed on a swelling hill at the foot of the mountain of Betpouey, as delineated in PLATE XIV. The proprietor is a man of some consequence in the neighbourhood. At a little distance on the left is a road by which the mountain may be ascended to its summit without difficulty. Proceeding onward, the defile becomes extremely

narrow, barely leaving a few feet of path, from which, down to the Gave, the rocks are almost perpendicular, and really affright the traveller with the idea of the danger he would encounter in making one false step. In turning the angles of the projecting crags, my heart shrunk within me at the sight of the dread abyss of a thousand feet beneath; but soon, seeing the security of my horse, I recovered myself so as collectedly to contemplate the sublime scenes around. The descending sides of the precipices consist alternately of luxuriant foliage and richly veined rocks, in awful and majestic forms. The Gave foams with tremendous fury, and three lengthened cascades are viewed at the same moment. We traversed a marble quarry by zigzag steps, till we reached the narrowest part of the gorge, at the foot of the Peak of Bergons, here called the Passage of l'Echelle. This dangerous path has cost the lives of several men and beasts: formerly it was guarded by a small tower, erected to check the incursions of the Spaniards. Part of the track has been rendered less dangerous by a prodigious work of art, the labours of certain individuals, whose exploits have been commemorated on a tablet of granite in the following inscription:

BRIDGE of SLA.

Contemple
Ici,
D'une ame ferme et d'un œil assuré,
Depuis de ces monts sourcilleux
Jusqu'au fond de l'abyme,
Les prodiges de l'art
Et ceux de la forte nature.
Adouci par l'industrie humaine,
Le fier genie de ces montagnes
Defend d'y trembler desormais.
Travaux executés en 1762.

We found the air piercingly cold, and leaving this frightful passage, we descended to cross the Gave by a marble bridge. The path is extremely steep and rugged, and takes a serpentine direction. Just before crossing the river, we caught a glimpse of a picturesque scene, represented in PLATE XV. An enormous stone, of a deep crimson hue, rests on the edge of the torrent, at the foot of some small cascades, over which is seen springing the bridge of Sia. On reaching the bridge, the banks are so precipitous, that the greatest caution is necessary. From the parapet, the view is exquisitely grand: the constant noise of the foaming waters resembles thunder; the dashing of the huge pine-logs against the rocks as borne along by the furious current, and the foaming spray often rising to the spectator, rivet his attention in the strongest manner.

A representation of this view from the point just mentioned is given in PLATE XVI.

We now ascended the left bank of the river by a path as narrow and broken as heretofore, and reaching a few shepherds' huts at the bottom of a narrow valley, again crossed the Gave by a wooden bridge, the centre of which rests upon an enormous block of granite in the midst of the torrent. From this place to Pragnères, half a league, the road is less broken. The valley enlarges and becomes less wild at the village of Gédre. Such a profusion of commanding scenery here opened upon us, that it is difficult to select, and at the same time to vary description sufficiently to avoid repetition. The plates may help to give a general idea, but the vastness of objects never can be compassed by the pencil. Although a residence of five weeks in the mountains had accustomed my eye to stupendous objects, yet here the mind and eye seemed incapable of embracing their immensity.

The village of Gédre is placed at the opening of a lateral valley from the south-east. From this valley issues a considerable torrent, which exhibits a superb curiosity: behind the small inn, a large mass of rocks chokes up the valley, and has turned aside the direct course of the impetuous torrent, which has forced for itself an opening, ten feet in diameter, into a

VIEW from the BRIDGE of SLA.

natural grotto, the roof of which is nearly matted over with the thickest foliage, festooned in the most graceful manner, and so clustered as to be nearly impervious to the light. Hence a gloom is thrown around, which contrasts exquisitely with the silvery spray that dashes about in incessant variety. The waters soon become tranquil, and flow at your feet a perfect mirror; the minutest object may be seen in it, especially the trout, which abound there: they are frequently observed endeavouring to regain the height from which they have been dashed down; and to this end they form themselves into a circle, with their tails in their mouths, and thus dart up to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. Tradition reports, that the village was formerly much larger, but that nearly the whole of it was once swept away by the first bursting out of the torrent.

Proceeding onwards, all cultivation, even in patches, ceases; and again ascending, we came to a defile of the most appalling appearance, exhibiting an immense mass of rock, which has fallen from the overhanging mountain: it is called Chaos, or Peyreda, by the country people; and indeed we might say, "Chaos is come again!" Most of the blocks are larger than the loftiest houses. The greatest care is necessary in traversing this ruin of nature: nothing can

be more horrible to behold. Some of the blocks have been found to contain 100,000 cubic feet: the largest appear like so many edifices torn up from their foundations, being generally of a square form.

We wound our way through these scenes for half an hour, like mere pigmies bewildered and lost in astonishment, passing a neglected lead and silver mine, once worked by the English: near the place are the ruins of the foundry. Just as we cleared all this, the mountain breaks open on the right, and we caught sight of one of the highest glaciers, the Vignemale, whose dazzling whiteness beautifully contrasted with the black scenery around us: we continued ascending till we reached Gavarnie, having passed a large defile, called the Valley d'Ossone. A torrent descends from it, making eight or ten cascades, all varied in character, springing out of the finest verdure and majestic rocks, with an effect more beautiful than can be imagined: nothing we had yet seen was comparable to it.

Once more we crossed the torrent, and arrived at the last village church in France, Gavarnie (see PLATE XVII.), in the neighbourhood of the finest scenes of all. In sight of Gavarnie, the Gave forces its way through rocks 200 feet in depth.

The village belonged formerly to the Knights

CHURCH and VILLAGE of CLARAIR.

Templars; the church was built by them, and they possessed *une maison d'hospitalité*, in which fifteen or twenty of them resided. The church contains a dozen skulls placed on a shelf, said to be those of the knights who were beheaded the day the entire order was proscribed: this may be doubted, but there can be no question but that these countries were once under their influence. In the valleys of St. Savin, Luz, and Barèges, all the churches exhibit sculptures illustrative of their order.

By this time we were a good deal fatigued: the *auberge* supplied us with excellent cheer, particularly a light Spanish wine, a contraband article. My companion had already commenced a series of sketches, and having suffered from the intense heat, he declined accompanying us to the foot of the renowned cascades. I should have observed, that at the village of Gavarnie, nearly the whole Circle of Gavarnie, as it is called, opened upon us at the distance of three miles; and it must be noticed, that from the rarity of the atmosphere in these lofty regions, objects a league distant are seen with as much clearness as though but a few hundred yards off: in fact, the sketches my friend made were as exact in their outlines as those done by myself when quite close to the objects delineated.

Having refreshed ourselves, the guide and I

started in good order, with a strapping wench running at our side, to take charge of the horses when obliged to dismount. I was enveloped in a large cloak to keep off the burning sun, and boots well greased to throw off the wet in wading some shallow waters. A ride of a mile brought us to the edge of a lake formed by the spreading out of the Gave, and afterwards by a gradual ascent we reached the spot where it is usual to dismount, and whence the astonished beholder first looks down with delight upon the entire amphitheatre of sublime objects.

All we had hitherto passed through had been dark and gloomy; all that was now before us was intensely brilliant, and of a beautifully golden tint.

The whole scene presents the interior of a vast amphitheatre, of a construction so regular as to seem the work of human hands, and which, in the language of the guide, would appear to be the last barrier of the world. The most striking object is a prodigious cascade on the extreme left, falling in one unbroken line 1266 feet. Before it reaches the bottom, it dashes against a huge mass of rock, and then forms the principal source of the Gave de Pau. In the centre of the view are seven other cascades, varying from 3 to 500 feet in perpendicular height.

The majestic scene is formed of glaciers, snow, and alabaster rocks; the summits of the amphitheatre are crowned with perpetual snows, and carried along in terraces, the faces of which are primitive alabaster rocks. On the very highest range, two enormous masses, of a square form,

"High o'er the rest display superior state,
In proud pre-eminence sublimely great,"

and are called the Towers of Marboré; and in viewing them, you are ready to take them for an aërial fortress. Not a sign of verdure is seen, except a few black pines at our feet. It must not, however, be imagined to be a cold snow scene; quite the reverse; every thing partakes of a yellow tinge, and the *tout-ensemble*, having somewhat of an artificial appearance, strongly resembles the drop-scene of a play-house. At the left corner, a huge rock, at least 2000 feet in height, juts out, and then comes the wonderful cascade, falling as from the heavens, like a mighty ribbon, joining earth and sky: the centre portion resembles an immense wall, rising in terraces, broken on the right by a wide opening, called the Brêche de Roland, from some fabulous tale of the time of Charlemagne. The view is then closed in by masses of pale yellow mountains, advancing nearer to the spectator, their edges overlooking the torrent of foaming waters which flow from the foot of the cas-

cades. The area of the amphitheatre is not less than two miles; but the deception of vision is so great, that a thousand yards would be supposed its utmost extent.

We hurried on to contemplate the scene in detail: every object of which it is composed is of a proportion far beyond all ordinary conception. We presently reached a vast oval of incrusted snow, which contrasts beautifully with the surrounding walls of primitive rocks. The apparent regularity of decoration is most striking. We beheld the foaming water of the larger cascade precipitate itself into a vast hole, under the snow: the thundering noise of its descent is tremendous. We found it impossible to approach the abyss too closely, as the atmosphere of spray which surrounds it soon wets the spectator to the skin, and we were obliged to retire.

The sight is confounded in considering the immense elevation of the Towers of Marboré, which form the crown to the entire scene, and seem to pierce the clouds. You are scarcely conscious that you exist, and experience a kind of ecstasy, or interior exaltation, which seems the effect of magic. The *Tours de Marboré* are seen from Toulouse on the side of France, and from Saragossa on that of Spain.

In a sheltered spot we rested two hours; and,

CASCADES and CIRCLE of GAVARNIE.

seated on the edge of a frightful precipice, shadowed by a rock, and with the guide standing before me to keep off the view of the horrid abyss, I attempted an outline of what was around me, as shewn in PLATE XVIII.

I should have before observed, that the rays of the sun, darting through the vapours of the cascade, throw out a most resplendent rainbow.

In taking our farewell of these mighty objects, on reaching the further edge of the small lake, I again turned to view the whole scene, so beautifully and clearly reflected by its rippling waters. The local guide-book quotes the words of an English nobleman, the famous Lord Bute, on first coming in sight of it: "La grande, la belle chose!——si j'etois encore au fond de l'Inde, et que je soupçonnasse l'existence de ce que je vois en ce moment, je partirais sur-le-champ pour en jouir et l'admirer." The same kind of enthusiasm does indeed thus transport the spectator. Safely returned to the *auberge*, after resting some time, we bade adieu to what can never be effaced from the memory.

Reaching the village of Gédre, and being greatly fatigued, we determined on resting there for the night. It would indeed have been almost impossible to have made our way back to St. Sauveur, as the numerous flocks of sheep that were passing rendered it extremely dangerous to travel along the narrow defiles.

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Starting early the following morning, we arrived at St. Sauveur at nine. On returning, at a very difficult pass, just beyond the bridge of Sia (see PLATE XIX.), we encountered a very large party of ladies and gentlemen, equipped for Gavarnie in good style, with attendants, guides, and mules gaily caparisoned. The ladies were much alarmed, but we cheered their spirits by telling them they had passed the worst. The clouds threatened bad weather; and such they actually experienced, returning, as we afterwards learned, in wretched plight, without having seen Gavarnie.

At some little distance from the village of Gédre is a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to which pilgrimages are made from the most distant valleys on the fête-days of the 15th of August and 8th of September. Being in the neighbourhood of St. Sauveur about the former time, I saw immense numbers assembling to offer up their devotions. For several days preceding the 15th, particularly the night of the 14th, men, women, and children were seen marching in lengthened files, chanting doleful strains. The melancholy and somewhat melodious hymns, proceeding from an infinity of voices, drove away all thought of sleep, and threw so strong a feeling of the romantic into the pilgrimage, that, had health permitted, I

DEFILE near the BRIDGE of SIA. 19

should have risen, and most willingly joined the numerous throng. The whole were in their best attire, the women in white, with scarlet capucins, and barefooted.

From St. Sauveur to Barèges, the distance is two leagues. Ascending the left bank of the Bastan, the road is lined with chesnut, lime, and poplar trees, and at this season every thing wears a gay appearance; but in winter I am told it is a sad scene, devastated by the numerous torrents which traverse the vallies. Every year requires repairs previously to the opening of the bathing season.

Barèges is seated in a gloomy hollow, confined on all sides by deep ravines; and but for its baths, so celebrated throughout France, it would long ago have been abandoned to the avalanches and the ravages of the Bastan.

The discovery of these mineral waters dates back many centuries. Under Louis XIV. they were much frequented, and at that period Madame de Maintenon repaired thither with the young Duke of Maine. The company at present resorting to this place are principally the wounded military, both officers and privates: the latter have one promiscuous bath under ground, solely for themselves; and a great portion of their expenses is paid by the govern-

ment. The temperature of these waters is 40° of Reaumur.

I dined twice at a *table-d'hôte* of the officers: their variety of uniform, and their ferociousness of appearance, owing to their huge mustachios, might lead a stranger to suppose himself in the company of brigands, did not the politeness of their manners belie the supposition.

The place is inhabited only in summer: in winter all the dwellings are consigned to the care of a few soldiers, to prevent their being made the resort of bears and wolves. Those who have seen the effects of winter here describe them as tremendous. During the last spring, twenty of the houses in the centre of the village were entirely swept away by an avalanche.

Of the progress of these phenomena, I received the following explanation: The first snows which fall adhere to the surface of those left from preceding winters, and become solid by the succession of thaws and frosts. Other snows again descending on these weak holds, and their weight soon becoming enormous, the slightest gale of wind is sufficient to set in motion these masses, which, once detached, gather size, and particularly force, from the incalculable rapidity with which they descend, and sweep down every obstacle opposed to them,

even the houses, which are constructed of stone and marble. The whole street is usually boarded over from roof to roof, to protect the place as much as possible. A view of the town is given in PLATE XX.

There are only two public promenades; but here, as well as at Cauterets, those who delight in the magnificent horrors of nature, will find ample variety of such scenes in the neighbouring mountains.

Our five days' excursion here terminated; and it may not be uninteresting to state, that the total of each party's share of the expense was less than sixty francs, including the hire of vehicles, saddle-horses, the guide, and enjoying each day most excellent fare, more particularly a choice Spanish wine brought in by the smugglers.

On our return to Cauterets, I was in some little anxiety on discovering the loss of my passport, more particularly as it had not been registered by the *maire* of the village, as is usual. On my applying to him, and stating the circumstance, he advised my waiting a few days, as possibly it might have been found by some one, and no doubt would then be restored to me. Before a week had passed over, news was brought of its recovery, having been picked up by a mountaineer at a distance of

nearly forty miles from Cauterets. A trifling reward satisfied the bearer, and I was well pleased to regain a document of such importance to every traveller in France.

To illustrate the great severity of the police, and the pertinacity with which its myrmidons follow up any object that presents itself under suspicious circumstances, I cannot resist the inclination to relate an anecdote, in which a French gentleman, a friend of mine, and with whom I renewed acquaintance in the Pyrenees, was the most prominent actor. We were out strolling in the valley of Cauterets, and in one of the rugged paths came abruptly face to face with one of the mountaineers. His eye suddenly caught that of my friend; his countenance turned deadly pale, and his whole frame seemed instantly paralyzed. My companion gazed at him with great earnestness, and we passed on. Curious to know the cause of so singular a circumstance, I immediately questioned my friend, and the following is an exact relation of rather a romantic adventure:

In the year 1808, he, being then very young, was taking the waters of Cauterets: among the other residents of the place was the Duke d'O——, a Spanish nobleman of the very highest rank. At that period Buonaparte was at Bayonne, endeavouring by diplomatic intrigue

to effect the dethronement of the Spanish monarch: aware that the Duke d'O—— was in the French dominions, and fearing lest his powerful influence in the Spanish councils might materially retard the accomplishment of his wishes, Buonaparte gave orders to the police to keep a strict watch on all the duke's movements, and to resort to force to prevent his return to his own country, from which he was not more than ten miles distant. The duke was perfectly informed of the object in view, and appeared to sacrifice all political feeling to the recovery of his health, at the same time that he was devising every possible means of escape. His health not permitting him the fatiguing traverse of the mountains on foot, by dint of large bribes he had succeeded in engaging four of the mountaineers to carry him by night in one of the light sedan-chairs used by the bathers. They had accomplished one-half of the difficult journey, when suddenly they missed one of their comrades. The whole party were in consternation: the most urgent entreaties could not prevail on those who remained to proceed; they foresaw, they said, that the first act of their treacherous companion would be to inform the village authorities; and should they even gain the Spanish territory, they themselves would certainly be denounced to the police, and their own utter

ruin would inevitably ensue. There was besides a great probability of their being overtaken, having yet the most difficult part of the traverse to make. In this painful dilemma the duke determined on returning, and, if possible, reaching, before the dawn of day, the bath of the Près, where most probably the search would commence. In this he succeeded; and having dismissed the mountaineers, ordered a bath to be prepared for himself. While thus engaged, the *gens-d'armes* arrived: they were greatly surprised to see the duke's servant at the bath-door, and demanded an explanation of their movements. The servant, well instructed by his master what replies to make, denied most vehemently any intention of quitting Cauterets at present; telling them, that the duke had merely made this night excursion for the purpose of enjoying the view of the sun rising from some of the neighbouring mountains. On leaving the bath, the duke with admirable *sang froid* corroborated the story of his servant. Each party then returned to the village; the affair soon became known, and the duke was more strictly watched than before.

It was this same mountaineer who had betrayed the duke that now crossed our path; his base treachery had ever after rendered him an object of scorn and execration to the people.

The very prominent part which my friend

took in this attempt at escape, and in the duke's subsequent evasion, which was well known at the time, caused him to be so particularly recognised at the distance of fifteen years, and brought back those bitter recollections which had so deeply affected the poor mountaineer.

The reader may feel interested in knowing the particulars of the duke's subsequent measures for escape; and I have pleasure in recording them and their result, as they do infinite credit to the ingenuity and presence of mind of my esteemed friend.

Previous to this first affair he had been presented to the duke, and in a great degree gained his confidence. Excited by the hope of adventure, heated by notions of outraged liberty, and at an age when our feelings are freshest, he proposed to the duke another plan of escape, which almost immediately met his approbation. I need not dwell on the liberal promises which flowed on such a fair prospect of success being opened to him; the duke's heart swelled with impatience to revisit his beloved country in such trying times, and to use his influence to prevent its falling a prey to the common enemy. A week's preparation was required, it being necessary to seek some little extraneous aid. The plan was, to assume the disguise of the lower class of parish priests, and by a circuitous

route reach the Spanish frontier; but without introductions to the different *curés* at the towns through which they would have to pass, it was morally certain they must soon become suspected. In taking so important a step something must be risked; and by dint of promises and more substantial advantages, the *curé* at Pierrefitte was induced to give his counsel and assistance in furthering the affair.

On the breaking up of an evening party given by the duke, each took his disguise, and mounted on mules, repaired to this village-pastor, who was prepared to receive them. With him they remained secreted the following day, and at night again set out for Lourdes, supplied with a letter of introduction to another of the priesthood, and which was to be presented towards the middle of the day, to avoid any appearance of having travelled by night. By his means a conveyance was found to Oleron, and from thence, without much difficulty, they gained the Spanish frontier. The duke's possessions lay in the north of Spain, and he was almost immediately recognised, and escorted to the nearest town. At this period the whole of Spain was in a state of the highest excitement, owing to Buonaparte's unprincipled treatment of the royal family: the duke's presence was the signal for a general movement. Old and

young of both sexes and of all classes were seen hurrying to the market-place, and nothing was heard but cries of "Down with the French!" and "Ferdinand for ever!" In truth, so blind was their zeal, and so bitter their execration of any thing like a Frenchman, that my friend assured me, he himself had nearly fallen a victim to their fury, owing to the ignorance on the part of many of the important services he had rendered the duke. His immediate return was therefore deemed advisable; and receiving the overflowings of the duke's gratitude, he regained the frontier of his own country, and by a laborious passage of the mountains, reached Cauterets without molestation.

So far as regards the duke's escape, the narrative might here terminate; but as the result was of serious importance to my friend, I may perhaps be allowed to give it. He had been quietly residing some days at Cauterets, when he received notice from the *maire* to attend him at his house, and was at once openly charged with having assisted the duke in his escape. It was here that his admirable presence of mind shewed itself: with the most perfect *sang froid* he positively denied having participated in it: it was true, he said, he had been absent from Cauterets five days; but his diary, which he was in the habit of keeping, would give every parti-

cular of his movements during that period. This he produced, and from his apparent frankness of demeanour and seeming indifference to the result, the *maire* was for the time satisfied. Another week passed over, when he again received a visit from the *maire*, who this time was supplied with certain facts, which could only be replied to by a stout denial and a careless indifference of all that was urged against him. The *maire* again left him, absolutely at a loss how to reconcile such contradictions; for I have omitted many ingenious devices which my friend had formed to give plausibility to his own statement, such as shewing fictitious memoranda of his expenses at different *tables-d'hôte* which he had pretended to have visited.

The usual time of visitants leaving Cauterets was now drawing near, and with others he repaired to Bagnères de Bigorre. The following morning he received a visit from the *maire* of that place, who had the old story to urge against him, with still more important additions: however, the same apparent candour here likewise served him; and after a few days' stay, he entirely quitted this department of France, and repaired to his home at Bordeaux. Here he was visited by the *commissaire de police*, to whom he was known, and the same explanation of his conduct was demanded as had

been before required. There was, however, this friendly intimation given, that most probably twenty-four hours more would not pass over without orders being received for his arrest. In times like those such an event would have been his utter ruin. His determination was quickly taken: having connections in the Isle of France, and a vessel being about to sail thither from Bordeaux, he bade adieu to all, instantly embarked, and at the period I became acquainted with him, he had lately returned, having amassed a considerable fortune.

It was during a subsequent visit to Barèges that I made several excursions to the neighbouring scenes, among others to the Pic d'Aire, and followed up the valley of Bastan to the Tourmalet, completing the tour of the High Pyrenees in reaching Bagnères by the beautiful valley of Campan.

The Pic d'Aire, vulgarly called Lièze, which has an elevation of four thousand feet above Barèges, may be approached by the Heritage à Colas; but that mountain is too frightfully scored with ravines to be easily ascended: we therefore made a long *detour* in gaining the *plateau* overlooking Lienz, and gained the track of the mountaineers who frequent the forests of pines which clothe the lower part of its sides. On quitting the usual path, we found

the difficulties increase: a loose red earth, with large patches of rhododendron, intercepts the way; from these we escaped by the tracks of the sheep, which assemble here for pasture. To this succeeds another region, studded with various plants, among others the bear's-grape, with its beautiful red fruit. At the height of twelve hundred feet above the range of wood nearly all vegetation ceases, and the mountain is seen formed of argillaceous schist, of a greyish black colour, and abounding in iron ore: at last we reached the two summits. On the 11th of August the snow still remained: Reaumur's thermometer was at 13°. We noticed the surface of some of the snow strewed with dead bees, which certainly must have come from Barèges: a sudden cold had no doubt seized and destroyed them. We descended into the valley of Lienz by most abrupt precipices, frequently sliding down, extended on our backs with our legs crossed, and guiding ourselves with our iron-pointed sticks either to the right or left; and reaching a small cabin without any accident, we there refreshed ourselves. The valley requires no particular notice: it is bounded in by peaked mountains on all sides; in the centre is a small lake, the overflowings of which fall in silvery cascades, and find a vent in the Gave of Bastan. The solitude of this valley

CASCADE DES ECOUADOUS

is most striking, and we quitted it with regret. The whole scene is what the French call *une superbe horreur*. To those to whom the fatigue attendant on such an excursion would be an obstacle, it may be important to know, that nearly the whole of it may be accomplished in light chairs borne by the sure-footed mountaineers, as at Cauterets.

In ascending the Bastan in the direction of the Tourmalet, you pass the torrent named Lienz, issuing from a defile strewed with rocks; afterwards comes the gorge of Escoubous, equally black and sterile, but of greater magnitude. At its extremity is the lake of Escoubous, which, in the memory of some of the inhabitants, burst its bounds, and carried devastation to the whole town of Barèges. A beautiful cascade, represented in PLATE XXI. still carries off its superfluous waters. The guides speak of several of these lakes in the immediate neighbourhood.

Leaving the valley of Escoubous on the right, we arrived at the foot of the Tourmalet by a difficult road between the Bastan and a file of mountains, surmounted by the peaks of Campana and Espades. The chain is broken by a wild cataract, issuing from the lake of Onchet. The Pic du Midi may be visited through this opening; it is the highest accessible mountain of the Pyrences; as seen from hence, its po-

sition in front of a long chain is perfectly magnificent. The Tourmalet, which unites it to a more southern chain, is the termination of the valley of Barèges; and here commences the comparatively easy path to Bagnères de Bigorre by the valley of Grip and that of Campan, so famed through all France.

The Tourmalet appears like a vast rampart, dividing black sterility and the most variegated fertility; a spot whence you may view Nature in all her most awful and dreary vestments, and Nature luxuriantly and splendidly attired, beautiful and smiling: it seems the contrast of life and death. By the actual sight only can the extraordinary difference be appreciated. Arrived at the summit of the Tourmalet, nothing is seen by the spectator behind but vast black mountains:

> " ——dans ces lieux empreints de majesté,
> Tout respire un mâle et sauvage beauté:"

his imagination feels the gloom of all around: what would seem an old castle dismantled rises up on a point apparently impregnable, and aids the grandeur of the *coup-d'œil.* Turning round, and looking towards the east, what a glorious view! what can be more gorgeous and enchanting! Dark impressions give way to softer and more agreeable sensations: on casting the eye over the few cabins and the delightful pastures of the

CASCADES & VILLAGE of GRIP. 72

superbly picturesque valley of Grip, you trace the sources of the Adour meandering in creamy whiteness by the many breaks of its craggy banks. As the eye extends its compass, the rich valley of Campan opens, embrowned with the ripening harvest: innumerable villages appear with their pointed steeples, which, by their comparative littleness, shew the immensity of the towering mountains. At the small village of Grip, the sources of the Adour are seen dropping from mountain to mountain at a distance of eight miles, as shewn in PLATE XXII. uniting in one cascade of great beauty at the foot of the village.

In bidding adieu to these less frequented and wilder parts of the Pyrenees, I cannot resist a slight notice of a class of people called the Cagots.

In my two months' sojourn amidst these mountains, I sometimes came in contact with this singular race of human beings, and who are, I believe, peculiar to this part of France. No language can describe the utter wretchedness of their appearance; shunned by every one, they crawl upon the face of the earth in the most abject state of want and misery, such as can only be known but in being witnessed. Their complexions are cadaverous in the extreme; many of them afflicted with the *goitre*,

of dwarfish stature, and for clothing, a sort of sackcloth is all that distinguishes them from "the beasts that perish."

The origin of these poor creatures is lost in the distance of time. Mons. Palassou, who has written a memoir on the subject, is of opinion, that they take their rise from the last of the Saracens, who were defeated by Charles Martel in the neighbourhood of Tours, and subsequently driven into these mountains, and afterwards became objects of hatred and contempt.

The habitations of these outcasts are apart from all the towns and villages, amid dreary valleys and unwholesome swamps. Among other persecutions, they were formerly obliged to bear a badge, indicative of their degraded class. These cruel distinctions pursued them even to the churches, which they entered by a separate door; and the holy waters appropriated to their use would have been thought by their more favoured fellow-beings rather those of contamination than of blessedness.

I was confined to a village by incessant rain one whole day in the neighbourhood of some of these people, and never can I forget the two or three objects which presented themselves, more particularly one, a female: the face was horribly disfigured with the small-pox; the *goitre* had

extended itself so completely round the throat, that no protrusion of the lower jaw could be perceived: a filthy blanket was thrown over her shoulders, extending to the feet, and held round her person with folded arms: her *tout-ensemble* was loathsome in the extreme; and although young, the expression of the eye indicated that disease and misery were struggling within. A trifle bestowed upon her seemed for a moment to dispel the habitual gloom of her wretched countenance, which conscious degradation had so deeply engraved upon it. In nearly one attitude she remained opposite to the *auberge* full three hours, attracted thither no doubt by the hope of charity and the gratification of vacant curiosity, which the arrival of any stranger would most probably afford. In speaking of her to the mistress of the house, her answer convinced me, that she hardly thought the poor creature worthy of notice as a human being. The government of France ought to seek the improvement of these miserable people; but I am aware that they have difficulties almost insurmountable in the prejudices and long-cherished abhorrence of association which the mountaineers entertain towards them.

The village of Grip is the extent of pasturage in summer; in winter all beyond to the south is buried under snow. An hour's ride

from Grip conducted us to the village of St. Marie, the first seen in the valley of Campan, a view of which is given in PLATE XXIII. At the farm of P——, the pass opens, leading to Bagnères de Louchon. In the neighbourhood of St. Marie are some fine marble-quarries, which furnished the rich decorations of the palaces of Versailles and Trianon.

The valley of Campan, the constant boast of every Frenchman, deserves all the praise that can be lavished on it, exhibiting a vast plain of the richest verdure, studded with noble *châteaux* and large villages. A thousand brooks and rivulets murmur at your feet; every meadow has its little waterfall; the acacia, the walnut, and every tree that can adorn a landscape, are seen in abundance. As the view extends upwards to the skies, the objects become quite violet-tinted, with here and there patches of black pine, some of which creep up to the summits, in fine contrast to the glowing tinge marking their bared peaks. The eye is irresistibly drawn to the stupendous Pic du Midi, the grandest ornament to this beautiful spectacle: he seems to reign lord paramount of all around him.

An intelligent traveller, Mons. Pasumot, thus describes his ascent of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, the Mont Blanc of the Pyrenees:

" Leaving Barèges at the early hour of four,

VILLAGE of STMARIE with VALLEY of CAMPAN.

and accompanied by a guide, we ascended the valley of Bastan almost to its head: we stopped short of the mountain of Tourmalet, at the foot of which falls the cascade which comes from the lake below the Pic du Midi. Opposite to the Pic de Campana, we began our ascent by the side of the rocks on our left, taking a zigzag direction to the first entry to the mountains. We paused a moment to contemplate three peaks to the southward, of prodigious elevation, the valleys between which were strewed with enormous pieces of rock in inexpressible confusion: they cannot be better described than in the language of the guide: '*Ce sont des montagnes écrasées sur elles-mêmes.*' We soon came to a small defile, most dangerous to pass, on the edge of a precipice, having scarcely eighteen inches of path, broken and intersected by torrents. At last we reached a lovely pasturage, closed in by small mountains, in which were grazing a number of cows and young mules. We quitted this green retired spot, mounting westward by a very rugged slope, which conducted us to a narrow gorge, through which we had to pass: it skirted the foot of an isolated peak, formed of a mass of grey marble. This was the entrance to the mountain. We now found ourselves in an elevated valley, inclined towards the south, studded with rocks of schist,

through which we forced our circuitous way. This valley, named le Covret d'Oncet, is formed of the bases of several mountains, whose summits rise to a great height; one of which our guide assured us had had its summit rent in two during a thunder-storm.

"After many windings and difficult ascents, in which a fall might have been very dangerous, we reached at seven o'clock the borders of the lake d'Oncet, which is between three and four thousand feet above the level of Barèges. At the extreme end of the lake rises an isolated peak, three thousand feet in height. We here quitted our horses, and leaving them to graze at their pleasure, reposed, and took some refreshment. Having ascended about six hundred feet of the mountain, which overlooks the lake, we had a most extraordinary sight: the waters are so perfectly translucent, that the marble which forms the basin of the lake could be clearly seen, with the exception of its centre, where a circle indicated a much greater depth. No fish are found in this lake: the snow is here almost permanent, either on one side or the other, forming small floating islands, about eighteen inches below the surface of the water, and three feet above it. It was here that an enormous avalanche of snow suddenly precipitated itself into the lake some years ago, forcing

out the whole of its water, which rolled impetuously through the valley of Bastan, and carried away seventeen of the houses at Barèges. The spectacle is described as terribly grand: huge masses of granite were carried along with frightful rapidity.

"At half-past eight, we quitted the borders of the lake to ascend the Pic du Midi, the summit of which is to the north-east: we here put off our shoes, substituting what are vulgarly called *espardilles*, which are soles of thick canvas with sandals; the canvas is sufficiently thick to protect the feet, and yet supple enough to give a firm footing. Each provided with a large stick pointed with iron, we now ascended by a very narrow path, and came to a small plain covered with snow, over which we passed, sinking in about a foot at each step. The rocks surrounding this place abound in rock-crystal. We again began ascending rapidly: at about a third of the way, the path is impeded by a mass of rock, which it is necessary to skirt with the greatest care, employing both hands and feet: one false step, and you are irretrievably lost; there is nothing to stop your fall till you reach the dark lake at the bottom of the abyss. We now came upon another *plateau* covered with snow, in the centre of which is a frozen lake. On quitting this, we directed our course towards the sum-

mit of the peak, which is still one thousand feet higher. The track is both difficult and painful; but the hope of at last reaching its top sustains the courage. On the western side is a precipice perfectly terrific from its depth, which seems immeasurable. Leaving the precipice, we approach the summit in passing a small cabin, rudely constructed some years ago by Messieurs Rebout and Vidal, who inhabited it nearly a week, for the purpose of making with greater facility their physical and geological observations. At last we reached the so-much-desired summit, nearly ten thousand feet above the level of the sea; a solid naked rock, of an oval form, about forty feet by twelve, on which each traveller seeks to engrave his name. The thermometer was at 13° of Reaumur, a strong north-west wind blowing, but without any extreme cold. Towards the north, the face of the rock is a tremendous perpendicular: we approached it extended at full length; the precipice is horrible, from its prodigious depth; we durst not contemplate it long. The eastern side of the summit presents an immense cordon of snow: in tracing this ridge, we came suddenly upon a mountaineer, gay and lively, in search of the chamois or wild deer. He advanced boldly to the edge of the precipice: his assurance in leaping from rock to rock was quite

fearful. He caught up large pieces of marble, and hurled them into the abyss: in their fall, they carried with them other scattered fragments, which again dragged still more, increasing in noise, and conveying to the mind some idea of an earthquake. We were a little surprised on presently meeting four men barefoot, carrying guns: the first was of noble stature and handsome countenance. It seems they had ascended by the north-east, which side is so abrupt and intercepted by so many perpendicular points, that it appeared to us inaccessible. They were four chamois-hunters, as agile as the chamois themselves. The constant habit of traversing the mountains, and their passion for the chase, enable them to surmount every difficulty. They were now following the track of some wild deer. Seating themselves, and taking out a telescope, they shewed us, at a distance of about three thousand feet, a troop of thirty chamois; some of which were skirting a small plain covered with snow, and others were couched upon the snow itself, refreshing themselves. These hunters, after resting a short time, hastened to continue their chase: they descended to a small lake, while one of the party proceeded by a circuitous path to drive the deer towards where the others lay in wait to receive them: the game, however, escaped.

" From the summit we had expected to enjoy a sight of the immense plains of Acquitaine, to the north of the Pyrenees, to see Pau, Tarbes, Auch, &c. as well as the course of the Garonne as far as the bridge of Toulouse; but the atmosphere mid-way from the horizon was charged with vapour, which, from its great extent, appeared to be a vast ocean of dazzling snow. We saw nothing of the plains or the lower valleys, but rested satisfied with attentively surveying the surrounding peaks covered with perpetual snows, more particularly the highest points, the Brêche de Roland, the Towers of Marboré, the Mont Perdu, and Neuville; we distinguished the more elevated points of St. Sauveur and Cauterets; we even observed from the curve of the chain of mountains the convexity of the globe.

" It was impossible to tire in contemplating this superb amphitheatre, which presents to us such an extent of primitive mountains. As the vapour covered the valleys, the emerging mountains appeared like waves, and some of the peaks like ships tossing about in a sea of white foam. The superb scene furnished us with sublime ideas of the beauty and majesty of Nature.

" Our ascent occupied seven hours. The purity of the air recruited our spirits. Towards

PRIORY of St PAUL

noon we quitted this majestic spectacle, fearing we might be caught by the masses of vapour floating about, which began to increase; and we descended by the same route that we had taken in ascending.

" We had noticed an eagle and its mate winging 'the mid-air,' sometimes below, sometimes above us: the prodigious elevation to which they rose, and their inconceivable rapidity, astonished us, as they threw a shadow on the faces of the mountains. On the borders of the lake d'Oncet our hunters rejoined us: we all dined together, and, having taken leave of them, we sought our horses, which had not strayed far. At five o'clock we got back to Barèges, all well content, and full of admiration of the mighty scenes we had witnessed."

The author of " Highways and Byways," in his beautiful tale of Calibert, also describes his own ascent of this magnificent mountain, in a manner that cannot fail to make a strong impression on the reader.

Passing the village of Campan, we arrive at the priory of St. Paul, represented in PLATE XXIV. and continuing along the excellent road, look back on the villages of Grip and St. Marie. At the distance of two miles is the town of Bagnères de Bigorre, which may almost be said to be the last in the High Py-

renees; for here commences the immense plain of Tarbes.

As the Bagnères guide-book expresses it, "*Nous voici à Bagnères, dans ce lieu de plaisir et de santé, frequenté jadis par la jeunesse brillante et voluptueuse de Rome; plus tard, par les rois de Navarre, la noblesse Française et Montaigne; aujourd'hui, par tout ce que l'Europe a de plus illustre et de plus aimable.*" The situation of Bagnères and its environs is enchanting, every object that mingles in the picturesque being profusely scattered around. The promenades, both of nature and art, have a cheerfulness about them that is truly delightful. The Adour, divided into streams, flows through most of the streets, giving a freshness and salubrity to the air, so desirable in the summer months.

There are no less than twenty mineral springs of reputed efficacy in several complaints; and for the mere seeker of pleasure and amusement, at the height of the season there are ample means of gratification. Eight thousand strangers have been known to be collected here; its own population is six thousand; and as the local historian observes, "*Il est beau de voir les opulens de l'Europe répandus sur les bords champêtres de l'Adour, et tous les raffinemens de luxe en contact avec la simplicité des mœurs pastorales.*" The grand promenade of Coustous, formed of a

triple row of trees, has several handsome houses, ornamented with small terraces and gardens, looking upon it. The endless amusement of beholding the variety of characters and costume on this promenade, causes these houses to be in great request. A public fountain, abundantly supplied, stands at its extremity. Besides, there are usually a number of travelling *marchands* daily exposing their wares, particularly jewellery; so that after the stillness and dreariness of the mountain-scenery, the change is exceedingly pleasing.

There is an establishment somewhat like our Vauxhall, called *Frascati*. *Aimez-vous la société, le jeu, la danse, la lecture, les bains? Allez à Frascati.*

The town is very ancient: the Romans named it *Vicus Aquensis;* having experienced the happy effects of its baths, they left behind them many tokens of their gratitude; the most ancient is an inscription by Severus Seranus:

Nymphis pro salute suâ.
Sever. Scranus V. S. L. M.*

Mons. Jalon, a most intelligent man and good landscape-painter, has placed this inscription over his door. Many other monuments, and some votive offerings, have been discovered here.

Vitâ salvâ luit meritò.

The usual custom is for those who have frequented the other bathing-places, to close the season by a week or fortnight's sojourn at Bagnères: the highest temperature is that of La Reine, 38° of Reaumur. The military and the poor are allowed the free use of the baths after twelve o'clock. The cleanliness and elegance of all of them are very superior to the other establishments. That called Salut, about half a mile distant, is a most enchanting retreat: the promenade to it is beautifully shaded by lime-trees, which perfume the air most agreeably.

Mons. Jalon has formed a small cabinet of the minerals found in the Pyrenees: he has also by him outline sketches of nearly all the mountain-scenery of the High Pyrenees, drawn on a very large scale with extraordinary precision; a perfect anatomy of their wonders. He had lately visited Paris, and become acquainted with the works of some English water-colour artists: from a view he has since finished of a newly discovered waterfall, I am sure he will now be enabled to do perfect justice to the scenes around him.

A circumstance occurred while I was in the neighbourhood of Bagnères which made the residence of the English there very disagreeable. An Englishman had taken a book from the public library, the "*Histoire des Conquètes de l'Armée*

Française," and finding in it an erroneous account of the battle of Toulouse, had indulged himself in writing marginal notes of a very abusive tendency. The next reader of the book was a young Frenchman of duelling notoriety; and learning from the librarian who was the writer of these notes, immediately called him out. They met, armed with pistols, in the presence of fifty persons; both fired at the same instant, when the Frenchman was mortally wounded. The exasperation of the bystanders was extreme: the survivor with difficulty escaped with his life, and the *maire* was obliged to take him under his special protection till he could privately withdraw from that part of the country. For some weeks the irritation of the lower classes manifested itself in so marked a manner, that most of the English also retired for the remainder of the season.

At Bagnères, the circle of the principal bathing establishments is completed, and towards the month of September the visitants depart, almost satiated with the wild majesty of Nature to which they have been so long accustomed, and many sighing again for the plains and their corresponding monotony.

> "The majesty of rocks, the torrent's roar,
> A moment please or agitate."

In quitting Bagnères, we emerge altogether

from the mountains; and at this time, August, the leaves were beginning to fall, and the surfaces of the elevated lakes were frozen over: the region of perpetual snows is about eight thousand feet. The following are the heights of the most elevated peaks above the level of the sea:

Vignemale, S. S. E. of Cauterets	10,432 feet.
Marboré, Gavarnie	10,260
Mont Perdu, Spain	10,678
Pic du Midi de Bigorre	9,036
Pic de Bergons	6,504
Pic du Midi de Pau	8,442

The route to Bordeaux may be agreeably varied by leaving Pau on the left, and taking the direction of Tarbes, Auch, Agen, and La Reole. A few miles beyond the latter town is Langon, and there you again join the steam-boat to Bordeaux. The route may be still more varied by diverging to the interesting city of Toulouse, and thence to Agen. Tarbes is a place of some consequence, possessing a cathedral, and one of the largest government establishments for entire horses, for the purpose of improving the breed of that noble animal. From one of the promenades, the lengthened line of the distant Pyrenees is truly magnificent, the most prominent peaks being here all clearly discernible.

From Tarbes to Auch, a day's journey, is

nearly a perfect plain; in passing over which the traveller constantly turns round, to catch another glimpse of the receding mountains. Auch is a very gay and lively city, with a most beautiful cathedral: nearly every window of this edifice is formed of the richest painted glass, the preservation of which during the devastations of the revolution is truly surprising. From the principal promenade the Pyrenees are again seen at the distance of sixty miles.

From Auch to Agen, another day's journey, we passed through Lectoure, a very old town, on the summit of a lofty eminence, at the foot of which flows the river Gers. The views here are most extensive towards the south: on a clear day, at the distance of ninety miles, you first catch sight of the Pyrenees by this route, rising in awful majesty. A ride of twenty miles brought us to the gay and animating town of Agen,

> "Where Garonne's pastoral waves advance,
> Responsive to the song and dance,
> When the full vintage calls from toil
> The youths and maids of southern France."

A fair was being held at the time on the extensive promenade on the river's banks, and nothing can be imagined more joyous than the whole scene, realizing all that has been written of these gay people of the south.

In the neighbourhood of Agen the vine is cultivated in the most picturesque manner: at the foot of every kind of tree in the meadows, in the gardens, on the road-side, are planted two vines, which entwine their branches with those that support them, and thus form festoons in the most graceful manner imaginable.

The road continuing through Aiguillon, Tonnières, Marmande, and La Reole, constantly skirts the Garonne, which here flows in its greatest beauty. The latter place is overlooked by a noble ruin of a castle, and was for some time a resting-place to Lord Wellington's army previously to his advance upon Bordeaux.

A few more miles brought us to Langon, and there we embarked in the steam-boat, which, in a few hours, once more conveyed us to the second capital of France.

THE END.

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